From maker to patron (and back)

Helleke van den Braber

On gift exchange in the arts

1 — patronage is a game of give and take, and subject to its own rituals, norms, ideals, taboos, sensitivities, conventions, and transgressions
2 — patronage relationships are characterised by a dynamic and risky exchange of value
3 — studying patronage means researching the patron, the artist, the role of the artwork, and how they exist in relation to one another
4 — the idea that the patron only gives, and the artist only receives, is a misconception; both parties invest, and both parties benefit
5 — you cannot count that which one party gives to the other. What is being exchanged, is both tangible and intangible in nature
6 — the exchange of gift and counter-gift does not always end well
7 — patronage becomes more profitable once it is performed; therefore, research into patronage should be directed towards the interaction between the giver, the receiver, and the public
8 — since the nineteenth century, it is the artist who determines the conditions of the exchange
9 — patrons are also active in popculture; this kind of patronage is worthy of further research
10 — we should research how the giver and the recipient manage to make their anxieties productive
Inaugural Lecture 19th of January 2021
From maker to patron (and back)

On gift exchange in the arts
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Inaugural Lecture
spoken at the assumption of the Chair of Patronage Studies at Utrecht University, Tuesday the 19th of January 2021
Sir Rector Magnificus, dear people,

When, at the beginning of the 1960s, the Dutch author Gerard Reve decided that he wanted to find a benefactor—in his own words, a ‘protec-tor’—he was hoping for “a safe haven where I could prepare my life’s ship for sailing, a place from which I could sail out, seaworthy, and to which I could return when plagued by storm and adverse weather.”

This was fifteen years after he had made his debut. Plagued by uncertainty about his authorship, he was looking for a patron—simultaneously berth, anchor, and point of departure—someone he, as a wandering author, could turn to for enduring support.

However, when finally he found such a patron, in the form of the rich ship-owner Ludo Pieters, he was plagued by insecurities. That he was welcome in the villa of his benefactor seemed to him just. That he deserved his sup-port—about this too, he had no doubts. Yet what was it exactly that Pieters expected of him in return? In what precisely had he become embroiled?

1  Reve (1986), [no pagination].
What price did he have to pay for the warm welcome he received? The indeterminate nature of the relationship troubled him greatly. Whilst his patron was generous, from the lavishly decorated villa to the ultramodern art that decorated the walls; everything pointed towards a disorientating gap between himself—the artist, the bohemian—and the wealthy businessman before him.

Conversely, Pieters did not know what to make of Gerard Reve either. It was clear to him that he wanted ‘nothing else but to write’ in order to be able to make a ‘decent’ living, ‘free of cumbersome poverty’. Therefore, he gave him money, time, support, and plenty of space to work. Indeed, he always made room for Reve, even if, whilst staying at his villa, Reve decided that he wanted to write precisely at his desk. However, there was a price to pay for the honorable presence of this ‘formidable talent’—this troubled artist. Pieters described his contact with Reve as ‘anything but stable ground’, and questioned whether his investment would ever pay off—and if so, in what form. From behind his good-civil desk, and in his good care, would ‘the ugly duckling that arrived at our bourgeois pond’ ever ‘grow up to be a Swan of Dutch Literature’?

The patronage relationship between Reve and the shipping magnate would last for 23 years, during which time both had to concern themselves with important questions. What did they have to give—and what might they receive? What did their mutual exchange bring them, at what price, and with what result? Reve’s talent was the engine behind their relationship—but what role did the content of his writing play in the exchange between them? Whenever one engages in a gift relationship, there starts a game of give and take with uncertain stakes and outcomes—a game with its own rituals, norms, ideals, taboos, sensitivities, conventions, and transgressions.

3 Ibidem, 186.
— patronage is a *game of give and take*, and subject to its own rituals, norms, ideals, taboos, sensitivities, conventions, and transgressions
The relationship between Reve and Pieters gives rise to important questions, not only for them personally, but also for us as a society. We are implicated in, and bear witness to, this relationship, and as a result we are urged to think about contemporary issues, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Value</strong></th>
<th>What is the value of what is being exchanged here? For them, but also for us?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Profit</strong></td>
<td>That this relationship benefits Reve, seems clear. But is it ok for the benefactor to profit from this exchange as well?</td>
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<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td>Wealthy lover of literature supports controversial author—how does this influence their identity, both to themselves and to us?</td>
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<td><strong>Legitimacy</strong></td>
<td>How does the support of a patron justify the ambitions of the artist, and how does the work of an artist justify the ambitions of the patron?</td>
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<td><strong>Autonomy</strong></td>
<td>He who pays the piper calls the tune. Do we accept the idea that benefactors interfere with the creative process?</td>
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<td><strong>Dependency</strong></td>
<td>Does such a relationship not confirm the cliché of the artist as a parasitic beggar?</td>
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<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>How does this process of give and take affect the way in which culture is created, disseminated, and received?</td>
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<td><strong>Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Who is responsible for ensuring that culture flourishes: market forces, governments, or does this fall to citizens after all?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusivity</strong></td>
<td>Who can participate in the support and co-creation of art?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusivity</strong></td>
<td>… and who cannot? In other words, is the role of benefactor the preserve of the elite? And what does this mean for the diversity of the art that is available to us—the kind of art that this elite does, or does not, want to support?</td>
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Patronage takes many different forms. First of all, there is private patronage: creators who (like Reve) have been supported by private benefactors during the last century and a half. Then there is collective patronage, encompassing both the large and the small gifts to concert halls, museums, and theatres, as well as the contributions of donors and friends of orchestras and theatre companies. There are lovers of art who support their protégés via specially founded donor advised funds, or via their own large, private cultural foundations. There are lotteries who give to culture in an institutional setting. Finally, there are the young creators who manage to turn the appreciation of their admirers into cash via crowdfunding.

Whilst they vary widely, all of these relationships are forms of patronage, because all entail a dynamic exchange of value. However, this exchange is characterised by certain risks: both parties have much to gain, but equally much to lose.

Today, assuming the Chair of Patronage Studies, I want to explore this dynamic exchange via the deceptively simple question of what it is exactly that is exchanged between artists and their benefactors, for it is surprising just how little we know about this.

In the next forty-five minutes, via a number of visualisations and ten basic principles, I will explicate the dynamic of patronage. Indeed, we are making headway, because we have already discussed two—the remaining eight will follow in due course. Together, these principles will result in a handy shortlist upon which we can draw when we ask what patronage is, how patronage works, and via what discourses patronage acquires meaning. In addition, these principles will also serve to propose future research.

The beauty of principles, or assumptions, is that they are fundamentally provisional. They are written, primarily for fellow experts, and invite contestation. Therefore, fellow researchers of patronage, both those present in this hall and beyond: I am keen to see you take up the challenge. After all, whilst for decades, many different disciplines researched the various aspects of giving to culture, we have yet to discuss what we consider patronage studies to be, or rather, what we think it could be. The institution of this Chair of Patronage Studies in the Faculty of the Humanities of...
this university provides the perfect platform from which to engage in this
discussion, as well as to combine our strengths across the disciplines.
2 — patronage relationships are characterised by a dynamic and risky exchange of value
What is patronage?

Let us imagine the dynamic of patronage as follows. There is a patron, who stands opposite an artist. Here, the position of the artist may also be occupied by a cultural organisation—similarly, the position of the patron may also be occupied by a friend, donor, or crowd funder. In between them, there is the artwork: that is, that which is being created by the one, and supported by the other. The artwork is crucial here, because it stands between both parties as a ‘thing’ that both mediates and enables, but that is also polarising and contested. Without the artwork, there is no relationship: it is the very focal point of the interaction.

This basic structure can be researched in various ways. By far the majority of contemporary research is directed towards the giver—in particular with the question: why does someone give? What are their motivations? Often, this is followed by the question: how can we persuade them to give more, or give more frequently? Conversely, research into the role of the artwork itself is far rarer. Indeed, if it exists at all, it tends to research the impact that relationships of patronage have on the form or the content of that which artists create, or cultural institutions show. Research into the position of the recipient is particularly scarce. Most often, it is rather superficially assumed that artists are looking for benefactors and want to receive gifts from them. However, their position as the recipient often affects the way in which they experience their artistic practice and position their work—consequences that remain largely unresearched.

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7 Sociologists and researchers of philanthropy Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) brought together data from more than 500 different research projects into the (motivations behind) gifting behaviour in a review article.
8 A recent example is the research Cultuur in Nederland (2020; Culture in the Netherlands), commissioned by the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund and executed by the market research bureau Kien Onderzoek (https://www.cultuurfonds.nl/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/PBC%20PR%20onderzoek%20Cultuur%20in%20Nederland.pdf).
9 Examples of this type of research include the work of Geerdink (2012), who describes the role that literary works play in the relationship between writers and their benefactors. The impact of givers and collectors on what is being collected and exhibited in museums is explored by Gnypp (2015) and Steenbergen (2002).
3 — studying patronage means researching the patron, the artist, the role of the artwork, and how they exist in relation to one another
It is important to look at all dimensions of this practice. This means researching the patron, the artist, the role that the artwork plays in their interaction and, above all, how they all exist in relation to one another.

Superficially, the relationship seems clear enough: the patron donates, the artist receives – one-way traffic. However, when you look more closely, you see that the idea that one only gives, and the other only receives, is a misconception: both parties invest, and both parties profit.\(^\text{10}\) This may feel counterintuitive, because we are used to thinking of a gift as something that only goes one way. However, gift relationships can only exist if every gift is eventually followed by a counter-gift.

This means that we can conceive of patronage as a mutual exchange—an exchange in which balance is constantly sought. Indeed, how both parties seek *reciprocity* can be a fruitful subject of research.\(^\text{11}\) The one party gives on the precondition that the other gives them something in return. In this way, a relationship emerges in which both parties feel like they contribute equally.

By its very nature, the balance between ‘investing’ and ‘receiving’ is precarious and unstable. One who gives, can never know for sure what he or she will receive in return. Conversely, recipients can only guess what is expected of them. Nothing is set in stone. Therefore, we must consider the value of the gift to be ambiguous, unmeasurable, and uncountable. Indeed, if the gift is found to be quantifiable as such, it would cease to be

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\(^\text{10}\) For an analysis of the argument that givers are always looking for some kind of (often immaterial) profit—and hence, that no exchange of gifts is ever truly altruistic—see Mauss ([1925] 2007) and Bourdieu (1994).

\(^\text{11}\) For the idea that sustainable gift relationships must be reciprocal, see Gouldner (1960) and Komter (2005).
the idea that the patron only gives, and the artist only receives, is a misconception; both parties invest, and both parties benefit
a gift relationship, resembling more closely a straightforward relationship of ‘give and take’, more characteristic of economic exchange.\footnote{Abbing (2002) elaborates on the difference between the ‘market sphere’ and the ‘gift sphere’. Velthuis (2019) makes a similar point in his inaugural lecture Geven om geld: waarom de marktsamenleving giftrelaties nodig heeft (Giving for money: why the market society needs gift relationships).}

What is exchanged between the benefactor and the artist is much more than money alone. You cannot count what one gives to the other. One of patronage’s most charming characteristics is that the benefits do not allow themselves to be quantified. For the most part, such benefits escape simple profit calculations. Therefore, research cannot be limited to quantitative measures. As suggested above, whilst ‘how the giver can be persuaded to donate’ was the most frequently asked question, ‘how many euros he or she is willing to give’ occupies a good second place.\footnote{In the Netherlands, the best-known example of quantitative, longitudinal research into gift behaviour is the research Geven in Nederland (Giving in the Netherlands), carried out by VU University Amsterdam, which charts the gift behaviour of households, foundations, companies, and lotteries every two years (www.geveninnederland.nl).} This supplemental question —‘how much’— stems from an urge to measure the material gain that may result from the actions of the giver.

However, this is a very reductive approach. By reducing the gift of the patron to the level of mere cash, we do not do justice to all the other ways in which such a gift can be of value—ways that cannot be counted. The question ‘how many euros’ contributes to a discourse in which culture is framed as the ‘good cause’ and donating to culture as a form of ‘charity’. Such a discourse invites us to see the art sector as an intrinsically under-funded domain that costs much, but returns little, and is hence in constant need of ‘philanthropic rescue’. This argument informs us that we can best help artists by seeing them as pitiful figures that are not self-reliant, always penniless, and dependent upon the generosity of others. This story also does little justice to the patron. He only matters as long as he has money and is prepared to ‘let that money roll’. The philanthropic discourse of quantitative thinking reduces the giver to some kind of ‘money counter with attitude’, sometimes prepared to open the drawer, whilst at others, keeping his hand firmly on the purse strings. The value of other gifts, which may be of a different nature, does not matter in this narrative, even if—also with an empty kitty—the giver still has plenty to offer.

We saw how Gerard Reve hoped for support that could offer him a safe haven: simultaneously a berth, an anchor, and a point of departure. Cynics amongst us will say that only the rich are able to build such a haven for an artist, and of course, this is to a large extent true: without money, no villa and no desk to write from. Without money, a patron would also not be able to see an artist through the corona crisis. The centuries-long history
of patronage has been built on benefactors who have the financial means to enable artists to create.\textsuperscript{14} However, this is not the whole story—neither in the past, nor today.

In May 2020, the Dutch television programme \textit{Nieuwsuur} broadcast an interview with an elderly couple.\textsuperscript{15} They explained that, in the midst of the corona crisis, artists were experiencing a time of great uncertainty and were in need of support—although they did not use the term ‘safe haven’ directly, it was certainly implied. They suggested that, whilst artists could not expect this kind of support from the government or politics, they might find it with people like themselves; engaged elderly people who love art and visit theatres and concerts. They organised the initiative ‘Doe Mee Met Je AOW’ (literally translated as ‘Put Your National Old Age Pensions Act to Good Use’), mobilising hundreds of senior citizens and raising over 1 million euros.

\textsuperscript{14} Or the means to build cultural institutions and allow them to flourish. For example, see Hitters (1996).

\textsuperscript{15} This concerns the couple Hein Muller and Corine Muller-Bauer from Bussum. \textit{Nieuwsuur} (21 May 2020), NOS-NTR (https://www.npostart.nl/nieuwsuur/21-05-2020/VPWON_1310804), starting from 00:25:35.
This type of initiative is very characteristic of 2020: civilians who collectively take action to solve a problem that they no longer want to leave up to the government or the market alone.\textsuperscript{16} They take matters into their own hands and—also very characteristic of 2020—are nicely supported in this effort by both a private and a public partner: the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund, who divided the money; and Minister van Engelshoven (from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), who doubled every euro that was collected.

Crucial here is the fact that, from the outset, this couple intended their donation as a gift that was meant to be more than just money. To be more precise, whilst the gift was in fact monetary, they intended to give this money an additional, more powerful meaning. For them, the gift was a form of collectively standing up to applaud the artists, out of respect for their work. They were expressing their appreciation ‘of all artists in our country, and for what they bring us’. Here, the gift functions as an alternative form of applause. In this sense, that 1 million euros must be seen, not only as a countable, measurable donation, but also as an uncountable, unmeasurable \textit{counter}-gift: a token of appreciation for what artists have already given to society, year in year out, in all of those theatres, at all of those outdoor festivals, in all of those museums. Here, artists are not perceived as parasitic freeloaders, but rather as partners of equal value, who also deserve to be valued themselves. That 1 million euros is able to reach its full potential because the gift not only supports their work, but also legitimises it—and can thus be accepted by the artists with their heads held high.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} In her inaugural lecture \textit{Homo Cooperans: Institutions for Collective Action and the Compassionate Society}, De Moor (2013) speaks of ‘civilian power’ and ‘affective citizenship’: civilians who, ‘via collective action, via cooperation, and via self-regulation, try to reach a communal goal.’

\textsuperscript{17} For the relation between the gift, value, profit, and cultural legitimacy in pop music, see Van den Braber (2018).
you cannot count that which one party gives to the other. What is being exchanged, is both tangible and intangible in nature
How does patronage work?

Gift and counter-gift, tangible and intangible: how does it work? I am about to show you a schematic representation I developed based on the research I have been conducting for the past twenty years. For my colleagues, I would like to remark that here I am drawing on certain aspects of modern gift theory, but also on the old school capital theory of cultural sociologist Pierre Bourdieu—whose work, both for myself and my students, still provides a useful and inspiring framework upon which to base our attempt to grasp the principle of cultural exchange. The central question here is: in patronage, what exactly is it that is being exchanged?

Let us start at the beginning. There is a benefactor standing opposite an artist—again. The benefactor is situated on the left, the artist on the right. The artwork stands between them. The scheme is about to expand from these basic positions. Both parties, left and right, have their own plans, goals, and expectations, independent from one another. There is also a shared interest—one party wants to create or show art, and the other wants to facilitate this. They ask themselves: what kind of relationship would suit us, under which conditions, and to what benefit?

Art is not your archetypal ‘good cause’. More than with gifts to, for example, health care or development aid, givers and recipients tend to have their own ideas about what it is that can be allowed to exist between them. Via their choices, a selection is being made, and this happens based on the logics of value, which differ amongst different givers and different recipients. What kind of art deserves to come into being via

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18 See footnotes 10 and 11.
19 In particular, see Bourdieu (1983, 1986, 1992).
20 That benefactors select and classify is clear, however, precisely how this selection process takes shape in contemporary patronage—and with what effect on, for example, the form and consolidation of cultural hierarchies—has yet to be researched.
21 Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) propose a model comprising six ‘orders of worth’ according to which people justify their positions and valuations.
support, and what kind of art does not? And which one of them—they perceive—is to have the last word in this? These kinds of assumptions and expectations are very much worth studying.

Often the process stalls during this initial phase. There is not always a sequel. The complex choices that are raised during this phase, throw up barriers. The next step is also difficult: actually asking for, or offering, support is not easy. Many artists are ashamed: is asking not akin to begging? Is their work worthy of such a request? In the artworld, asking for support is often surrounded by feelings of discomfort and shame; a taboo that frequently emerges during this phase.\(^\text{22}\)

However, when giver and recipient do find each other, what follows is a process of complex exchange. What is it precisely that passes from the benefactor to the artist? First of all:

- **Economic capital**—This comprises material support in all of its forms. Here you may think of money, but also of providing the time, the materials, or the space that is needed to get to work. Or the financing of opportunities to perform or present work. Here, the patron functions as *financier*.
- **Social capital**—This entails support in the form of connections, access to networks, and facilitating social visibility and display. Here the patron serves as a *mediator*.

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22 De Vrieze (2020).
• **Narrative capital**—The third gift is immaterial in nature and just as crucial: via their support, patrons give artists the opportunity to construct a meaningful story or narrative around their artistic practice.\(^{23}\) From the moment patrons offer their support, creators can perceive and present themselves as ‘being of value’, as ‘supported’—their work approved of, selected, or chosen. In this narrative, the gift can serve as an alternative form of applause, the patron acting to *legitimise* the work of the artist.

What is given in return? As a rule of thumb, the reciprocity of artists, in the form of cultural capital, is immensely generous. This cultural capital translates itself into the gift of three different kinds of access:

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<th>patron</th>
<th>artist</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>step 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;develops plans, goals and expectations</td>
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<td><strong>step 2 gift exchange</strong></td>
<td><strong>step 2 gift exchange</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>patron gives:</strong></td>
<td><strong>artist gives in return:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>economic capital</td>
<td>cultural capital 1: knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social capital</td>
<td>cultural capital 2: proximity</td>
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<tr>
<td>narrative capital</td>
<td>cultural capital 3: impact</td>
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<td></td>
<td>narrative capital</td>
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- First, artists and cultural organisations offer their benefactors access to *knowledge*—that is, the exclusive right to gain insight into the backstory of their work. Access to the background story, developments, expertise, and achievements is a very desirable privilege for benefactors.

- The second reciprocal gift is that of the *right to proximity*. Who is allowed to be close to an artist, and close to the process of creation, is allowed

\(^{23}\) The concept of narrative capital is used by sociologist and organisational scientists in order to point towards the means that people have to construct meaning around their activities via ‘storytelling’, and how that meaning can be allowed to become part of their ‘sense of self’, or identity. Being engaged in projects (such as a patronage relationship) can help generate this ‘narrative capital’. Exactly how this works, is the subject of research conducted by Carlsen and Pytsis (2020).
to be close to the mystery of creation itself. Whether this means visiting a workshop, being backstage at shows, or dining with the conductor, in all cases it allows benefactors to experience an ‘aura’—the mysterious enchantment that lingers around artistic practice and that is often the ‘beating heart’ of patrons’ involvement with artists.

• However, here you may also think of the right to access in the meaning of impact: the right to participate in the decision-making process. Sometimes, once they have gained proximity, benefactors want to have a say in the composition of the setlist, the set-up of the exhibition, or the structure of the sonnet. However, this latter form of proximity is often contested, as it can translate itself into the right to influence artistic vision and policy.

• And here we also see that other type of counter-gift: the opportunity that artists give their patrons to construct a narrative about themselves; to develop an indispensable narrative that helps them to give meaning to their patronage. They enable their patrons to see and present themselves as someone who makes a difference, who gives their support to something with eternal value, something that is bigger than themselves, something that would not have been there without them; as someone who has earned a ‘warm glow’ of meaning, value, and inclusion—in short, as someone who matters.

This all sounds wonderful. However, does it always end well?

Unfortunately, not. The history of patronage is littered with unsuccessful encounters and disturbed relationships; with gifts and counter-gifts that arrived at the wrong moment, came in the wrong form, were either too large or too small, too much or not enough, or missed the mark in a different way. It takes tact, patience, and trust to reach a good communal exchange. The history of patronage is a history of attempts—sometimes gloriously successful, but often ending in conflict, misunderstandings, or the complete breakdown of the relationship. Wonderful material for a researcher.

Many such conflicts are about finding the right balance. Does that which the patron gives, outweigh that which he expects in return in terms of knowledge, proximity, and influence? Can you, as an artist, museum,
6 — the exchange of gift and counter-gift does not always end well
orchestra, or theatre company, keep the patron at a sufficient distance? Conflict is never far away, because this kind of territorial marking is inherent in the dynamic of patronage. Museum Boijmans in Rotterdam experienced a very public failure during this particular phase. In 2019, the museum clashed with its patron Martijn van der Vorm, precisely about the matter of distance and proximity. An article published in the Dutch newspaper De volkskrant, published in May 2019, details how, when Museum Boijmans wanted to construct a new building to showcase their collection, Van der Vorm wanted to contribute, donating millions to stimulate cultural life in the city of Rotterdam, as he had done many times before. However, they could not agree upon the appropriate counter-gift. The museum wanted to limit the right to proximity, pushing towards an exchange in which the patron maintained an appropriate distance. Van der Vorm, however, adopted a different position (via Wim Pijbes, his mediator), in which he demanded the right to engage in discussions on management and policy. ‘Just get used to it’, Van der Vorm told Boijmans.

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**deVolkskrant**

**ACHTERGROND CULTURELE MECENAS**

**De nieuwe mecenas wil invloed op cultuursector, wenn er maar aan**

Gulle gevers in de cultuursector willen meekrapen, al botst dit met de regels. Koudwaternrees van de politiek of willen ze de boel overnemen?

Michiel Kruijt en Bart Dirks 15 mei 2019, 22:50

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26 Kruijt and Dirks (2019).
This is an example in which the exchange failed. The museum protected its autonomy and decided not to engage with Van der Vorm, rejecting his millions. Yet these kinds of clashes do not exist in isolation—it is important to study them, because they can teach us many things about the complexity of the interplay of giving and receiving. We could refer to this sentiment as ‘patronage anxiety’ and it is my proposition that, if you want to understand anything about patronage, you should start with this anxiety. This is a theme to which we will return shortly.

Therefore, in the context of the above, it is more a case of if it goes well, than the certainty that it will. Let us imagine for a moment that it does succeed. Yet, for both the patron and the artist or institution, there is more to consider.

If the relationship is successful, both parties can add value by making their relationship visible to the public. In this way, they collect prestige or authority or, in other words: symbolic capital—a type of capital that can be equated with status and will come their way if they manage to show
and demonstrate their successful connection to others.\(^{27}\) The strategies via which they do so differ on a case-by-case basis, and are also very much worthy of study.\(^{28}\)

It is up to the public whether they recognise and legitimise this relationship. If indeed it is appreciated, then ultimately, this will generate profit.\(^{29}\) As a matter of fact, the true value of patronage is not what you have managed to secure during the second phase. Rather, it is about the subsequent step—the third phase. Collective belief in the relationship means that the outside world sees and recognises your apparent worth—that the patron had a precise reason to pick you; that the artist had good reason to choose you specifically to gain access to his inner circle; or that you both helped precisely this artwork come into being. This consolidation of the positions of all of those involved, is priceless.

However, it can also happen the other way around. Onlookers tend to judge harshly those relationships that they perceive to be ‘unbalanced’—relationships in which privileges are either divided unequally or demanded too explicitly. Earlier, I suggested that patronage is not only profitable, but also full of risks and it is here, in step three, that these risks come to the fore. Precisely for those benefactors who make visible to whom they give and under which conditions, this may represent the shortest route towards the loss of, or damage to, their reputations. The other way around, artists or art institutions who reveal from whom they receive support, and in exchange for what, might lose credibility. We have already seen how this happened in Rotterdam, but we will shortly see some more examples.

Therefore, research into patronage should not only study the first and the second steps (that is, the run-up and the exchange of gifts itself), but also the third phase (the moment when the protagonists symbolically consolidate their relationship by making it performative). Therefore, let us extend our basic scheme. Patronage is not a binary relationship, primarily taking place between giver and recipient. Rather, it is a triangle, taking place between the giver, the recipient, and the public.\(^{30}\)

\(^{27}\) For more information on public gift behaviour, or ‘conspicuous consumption’, see the classic work of Veblen ([1899] 2009). For conspicuous behaviour amongst recipients (in particular that of the writer Multatuli), see Van den Braber (2012, 2017).

\(^{28}\) In ‘Naar een diachrone blik op de verdiensten van Nederlandstalige auteurs’ (2020; Towards a diachronous perspective on the earnings of Dutch authors), Sleiderink, Van den Braber, Geerdink, and Ham present a scheme that can help further research into these kinds of strategies.

\(^{29}\) Bourdieu (1992) literally refers to the ‘accumulation’ of symbolic capital: just like economic, cultural, and social capital, symbolic capital can accumulate for certain actors (via the recognition of others)—or do precisely the opposite, and flow away from them (206 and 239).

\(^{30}\) Nelson and Zeckhauser (2008) point towards the ‘triangular nature’ of patronage during the Renaissance.
However, who are these others? To whom, and for whom, is this relationship shown and performed? We have only just begun to seek answers to this question. Unjustly so, because it could offer a very fruitful avenue of investigation to researchers. Who resides behind this ‘third position’, differs from case to case.

Sometimes it is us, society as a whole, who are allowed to know and form judgement. Sometimes it is a fan community surrounding the artist, or the broader network of the patron. Often, it is a smaller peer group surrounding them both, comprising insiders, fellow artists, and connoisseurs. Sometimes the audience is limited to an even smaller circle, the tight-knit mechanism of legitimisation working *en petit comité* of a few friends and acquaintances—smaller in scope, but no less powerful.
patronage becomes more profitable once it is performed; therefore, research into patronage should be directed towards the interaction between the giver, the recipient, and the public.
Sometimes the giver and the recipient do not direct their efforts towards the present, but towards the future—those later generations that will remember their names forever, having been immortalised via the renowned artworks that came into being thanks to their relationship.

However, all of this comes with one, crucial caveat. This third step can only be successful when both parties manage to present (to frame) their relationship as at least in part selfless. They must succeed in creating at least an illusion of generosity and altruism. If they present their relationship as ‘despite everything, always, free of charge’.
The importance of this framing as ‘altruistic’ cannot be emphasised enough. A gift can only be perceived as a gift and score symbolically if, as a giver, you carefully disguise the fact that you also profit from it yourself.\textsuperscript{31} It is this demand that lies at the root of ‘patronage anxiety’. The necessity has always been to appear selfless, although it received a decisive boost during the nineteenth century—one closely related to Romantic ideas of what it means to be a ‘true’ artist.

\textsuperscript{31} Bourdieu (1994) also emphasises that for givers, it is necessary to obscure the profitability of their gift. In this respect, Velthuis (2019) speaks of the ‘veiled gift’. 
The concealment of profit

Here, we see a painting by the French artist Gustave Courbet. It dates from 1854 and is entitled 'The Meeting'. The artist portrayed himself on the right, proud, chin up, independent, energetic, and defiant. Opposite him stands his rich patron, beautifully dressed compared to the artist, but also rigid and exhausted. Here, Courbet portrays the banker’s son who supported him at that moment. To the extreme left, we see a servant who embodies everything the artist on the right side of the canvas has avoided becoming: dependent and servile.

Here, Courbet represents the common relationship between artist and patron, turning their roles around. Here, it is not the patron who sets the boundaries and represents power, but the artist. In the 1850s, this was

32 Gustave Courbet, 'La rencontre', 1854 (also known as 'Bonjour monsieur Courbet'), in the collection held at Musée Fabre, Montpellier.
33 This banker’s son was art collector and patron Alfred Bruyas. See Chang (1996).
both a scandal and portent of things to come. The caricature (below) appeared a little later, in which the role reversal is even more pronounced—the patron losing his position even more radically, begging, on his knees, hat in hand.34

At the time, this kind of mocking critique of patronage was disseminated by the media only too eagerly. What we see here is a power struggle. The stakes are clear: who is the boss? Who has the right to decide what the artist paints, writes, composes, or plays? In terms of our scheme, the struggle thus concerns counter-gift number 3: the right to proximity, in the sense of impact. Until 1850, such relations were clearly defined: who pays, has a certain right to decide. Benefactors were used to drawing uninhabited legitimacy from this.

However, this changed after 1850. Artists declared their work to be autonomous. From then onwards, no one but the artist themselves had the right to decide what their work looked like. Influenced by the Romantic concept of artistic genius, they developed a new perception of their own worth and meaning. Autonomy and being loyal to one’s own vision became the guiding norm. This has substantial consequences for the position of the patron. From that moment onwards, he too had to fol-

34 This caricature was made by Quillenbois (pseudonym of Charles-Marie de Sarcus, 1855) and was printed in L’Illustration. Journal universel.
low different rules. Getting involved with the content of an artist’s work became taboo. The artwork that stands between them now becomes a contested space—an untouchable, no-go area for the one, and a holy territory that must be defended for the other.\(^{35}\) Whilst the patron can still take the initiative, from now on, he just has to wait and see whether his help is accepted, and if so, under what conditions. Benefactors are—and in this respect, the caricature is correct—at least partially, the questioning party that is forced into a position of humility.

Ever since this moment, the giver and the recipient have been searching for balance. The difference between them—and this is one of the most beautiful paradoxes of patronage—does not pose a limitation in this respect. Quite the contrary, it is their largest asset. The more artists and benefactors manage to be one another’s social counterparts and mirror image—the one moving in line, and the other, in many ways, outside of it—the more attractive they become to one another.\(^{36}\) Indeed, any attempt to stimulate patronage should teach artists to celebrate and embody this inspiring difference once more. The more they can remain Other to their benefactors, the more fascinating they will appear. The recent call upon artists to leave their attics and become more outgoing—as in, more efficient, effective, and more like us—undermines this inspiring, necessary difference. It erodes the mystery and undermines the ‘aura’ of artistic practice—that very same aura and mystery that we saw in the visualisation are so crucial for counter-gift number 2 (the gift of access, in the sense of proximity). It may well happen that, anno 2020, the call to entrepreneurship unintentionally prevents patronage from flourishing once more.

What right does the patron have to interfere with the choices of the artist? In order to demonstrate that this question is still very much alive today, we move from 1854 to 2014, and from established to popular culture. We will look at some images that teach us how a contemporary patron entered into an exchange with a pop musician—in this case, the socially maladjusted member of a rock band. The one walks ‘in line’, whilst the other does not. The pop musician is David Hollestelle, guitarist of the band Wild Romance. The patron is Jan ‘t Hoen, a rich property developer.\(^{37}\)

\(^{35}\) For example, this was true of the writers and painters of the Movement of Eighty and their benefactors. See Van den Braber (2016). Even today, the difference between ‘in line’ and ‘out of line’ remains crucial. Elkhuizen et al. (2014) point out that contemporary art has a tendency towards ‘disobedience’ in a culture that takes the ‘measure’ of art.

\(^{36}\) Krul (1998).

\(^{37}\) The exchange between Jan ‘t Hoen and David Hollestelle can be seen from 00:09:52 until 00:13:01 in the documentary Buying the Band (2014), directed by Teus van Sintmaartensdijk (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6-Or66jgQ0).
8 — since the nineteenth century, \textit{it is the artist} who determines the conditions of the exchange.
Jan ‘t Hoen himself does not come into view. Instead, we see a mediator who negotiates with the guitarist on his behalf—the band’s manager, Koos. The stakes are clear: what is the patron allowed to get involved in, and what not? The audience (the third party) is watching along, via the camera. A warning beforehand: this is not for sensitive souls and contains some swearing and obscene gestures.
‘What is his interest in me, then,’ we hear the musician ask. How can ‘t Hoen, with his ‘44 cars’, ask him to adjust his lifestyle? What are the foundations for his claim that he should get clean, become more productive, and maintain a level of quality? Whilst he is ‘a little tired’ and a bit wobbly, he is contented with what he makes and proud of his work. ‘Why can’t he just mind his own business’, David Hollestelle asks. But, mediator Koos argues, pointing towards their communal interest: ‘he does mean well’.

We see how the guitarist defends his autonomy, always with one eye on the camera, performing his indignance towards us as the public. He knows his fans are watching (the third party), and the judgement of fans weighs heavily in pop music. Those who alter their stance, are quickly seen as selling out. A true pop artist is independent (a rebel outsider), authentic (a sincere translator of his own truth), and not motivated by money (only interested in the quality of his music). Why does David Hollestelle make such an effort to show us that his artistic practice is ‘not for sale’, even though this means he antagonises his patron? Because he profits from our collective belief in his independence—an indispensable component in the last phase in the scheme.

In the meantime, underlying this display of autonomy lurks an intensive exchange of gifts. Both parties are searching for a balanced exchange of gift and counter-gift. This gift ultimately took on a special form. Jan ‘t Hoen, the bourgeois businessman, had been dreaming of gaining proximity to the world of rock ‘n roll for decades. For him, Wild Romance was ‘the band’.38 Once matters were resolved, he donated hundreds of thousands of euros. Not only did he give David and the other band members a place to practice, a luxury touring van, and oceans of time in the studio, but also a new focus, a new sense of self-confidence, and a new story to tell about themselves—all indispensable gifts for a band that is in the process of reviving itself. In return, he received a counter-gift of equally large value. The band actually allowed him to become a member of the band, taking his place behind the drumkit. The right to cooperation and co-creation here becomes the ultimate—albeit, since the time of Courbet, also strongly contested—counter-gift.

So we see that in pop music, relationships are tensioned. There is more to be gained there, because ‘t Hoen is no exception. Since the 1960s, private patrons have been active in the world of pop and rock, supporting bands and musicians.39 But also in subcultures such as metal, hardcore, hip hop, and dance, interesting gift cultures have emerged that have, thus

38 Ibidem (2014), Buying the Band, 00:00:48–00:00:55.
39 My exploratory (and as yet largely unpublished) research into patronage in pop brought up many case studies, both in the Netherlands and beyond, from the 1960s until now.
far, attracted hardly any research. Therefore, pop music will become one of the focal points that will be researched from this chair. For too long, research into patronage has only concerned itself with the canonical arts—it is high time to widen this perspective.

patrons are also active in popculture; this kind of patronage is worthy of further research
My final point. It is one thing to see how it works, why, and from whose perspective. However, this knowledge only gains meaning if we also take the wider context into account: if we pay attention to the stories that are being told about patronage. In other words, what discourses on patronage circulate in our society? Via these stories we can reconstruct the pros and cons of being a patron—what is allowed and what is not. Those stories differ across various time periods and across different cultures, and must also be researched as such.

One of those discourses I would like to propose here concerns the opposition between the exemplary or liberating patron on the one hand, and the unworthy and limiting patron on the other.  

There are two archetypical types of patron: on the one hand, you have the threatening image of the controlling patron—the benefactor who does not know his place, who corrupts and threatens the very art he seeks to support. Let us call him the ‘dark patron’. Our judgment regarding dark patrons is guided by our opinions on how creativity works. Artists who choose their own paths without feeling the need to compromise, seem to produce work that is purer, emerging from an unbridled creativity—from a ‘free space’ liberated of any external pressures. We have trouble accepting the dark patron, because he confronts us with an uncomfortable truth: that creativity is not free, but always socially, ideologically, and economically bound. Therefore, we are keen to turn towards his lighter counterpart—the ideal, enabling patron who frees the artist of his worldly troubles—the understanding supporter of every artistic vision. This lighter patron represents a safe haven, a generous admirer who grants creators the absolute freedom they need, who is grateful and applauds, and who

41 Many thanks to John Brewer, who, during his HLCS-fellowship at Radboud University Nijmegen in 2017, made me look at patronage narratives with different eyes, and who pointed me towards the inextricable entanglement of both discourses. See also Brewer (2018).
sees value in whatever it is that they are creating.

Ideal image versus worst nightmare. However, with these archetypes, it is not a question of either - or, but of and - and: they coexist in a symbiotic relationship. Together, they form an invisible cultural framework around all relationships of patronage. No matter which relationship you research, discourses of the good and the bad patron will resonate and give shape to the negotiations between both partners and to the story they are able to tell about themselves. I like to say that the one discourse is that of hope, whilst the other is that of fear. My deployment of the term ‘patronage anxiety’ is born of the productive friction that emerges between these two discourses.

I use the word productive here for a particular reason. The anxiety surrounding patronage is definitely not something that should be avoided or combatted within the cultural sector. Quite the contrary, the profitable yet also uncomfortable search for balance and reciprocity should be embraced and researched more openly. Let us see it for what it is: a goldmine from which we can learn.

Therefore, this chair will initiate research into dark patrons—those patrons who are, for whatever reason, perceived as unworthy. Such research will focus on what sometimes goes wrong, in order to gain insights into how it could be done better. Knowledge of this subject is also interesting for policy makers and politicians: knowing what brings both parties together (and what does not) can help those who provide guidance to these kinds of processes.
10 — we should research how the giver and the recipient manage to make their anxieties productive.
This tenth principle has brought us full circle: a research agenda comprising ten principles, or assumptions. Below, I list them once more. I hope they will inspire contradiction, discussion, and debate.

1. **patronage is a game of give and take**, and subject to its own rituals, norms, ideals, taboos, sensitivities, conventions, and transgressions

2. **patronage relationships are characterised by a dynamic and risky exchange of value**

3. studying patronage means researching the patron, the artist, the role of the artwork, and how they exist in relation to one another

4. the idea that the patron only gives, and the artist only receives, is a misconception; both parties invest, and both parties benefit

5. you cannot count that which one party gives to the other. What is being exchanged, is both tangible and intangible in nature

6. the exchange of gift and counter-gift does not always end well

7. patronage becomes more profitable once it is performed; therefore, research into patronage should be directed towards the interaction between the giver, the receiver, and the public

8. since the nineteenth century, it is the artist who determines the conditions of the exchange

9. patrons are also active in popculture; this kind of patronage is worthy of further research

10. we should research how the giver and the recipient manage to make their anxieties productive
'When all is said and done, I am just really grateful.' These are the words of patron Ludo Pieters, looking back at his relationship with Gerard Reve. He was a grateful giver, who had moved beyond anxiety. I too, would now like to express my gratitude.

I cannot believe I am actually standing here! Back at Utrecht University. This means so much to me, because this is where I came from. In 2002, I completed my PhD at this university with a research into—unsurprisingly—modern, twentieth-century patronage. I would like to thank the Executive Board, the Faculty Board, and the Dean for putting their trust in me. The fact that they awarded me this endowed chair and hired me, means that Utrecht University is keen to invest in the Humanities, and values the Humanities perspective, especially in these times of crisis and upheaval.

The university established this chair at the initiative of, and in collaboration with, the Stichting Geef om Cultuur (Foundation Care for Culture). Chaired by Julienne Straatman, this foundation has been arguing for more research into patronage, both enthusiastically and persistently. They are supported in this effort by three powerful partners: the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund, the VandenEnde Foundation, and the BankGiro Lottery. It is exceptional that the university, the Stichting Geef om Cultuur, and these three funds have come together in this way, combining forces in the form of this chair, with the aim of enabling broadly orientated and independent research into patronage. Julienne and the other members of the board: many thanks and appreciation for your efforts.

Acclimatising in a new working environment in times of corona is no easy task. Many thanks to my colleagues in Utrecht who have immediately involved me in their research plans. Geert Buelens, Laurens Ham, Tessa van den Waardenburg, and Camilla Pargentino—it is wonderful to be able to work with you on our research into resilience in the book sector. In Nina Geerdink I also found a wonderful, inspiring sparring partner. Many thanks also to Eugene van Erven, Rosemarie Buikema, Frank Kessler, Nanna Verhoeff, and all other colleagues from the Department of Media and Culture Studies: we will definitely know where to find each other in the coming years; I am very much looking forward to that.
I would not be here without the opportunities that Radboud University has given me. I have Sophie Levie to thank for everything, my promotor and my mentor for 27 years, and also to Maarten de Pourcq, the modest yet inspiring leader of the close-knit ACW team in Nijmegen. In Nijmegen, I was given the opportunity to set up the master Cultural Policy and Patronage—now known as Cultural Policy and the Business of Art—and I was able to deliver this inaugural lecture drawing upon many wonderful exchanges with the generations of students I had the opportunity to teach. I now belong to Utrecht, but I will always belong to Nijmegen too, and I hope to continue to inspire both my students and PhD students for a long time to come, as they continue to inspire me.

To my colleagues, my old friends, my new friends, my family: in these times of corona, you are not able to be here, and that is a shame. I could not manage without your support and your warmth. Rocco, my intense exchange with you has carried me through the past few years. For us, half a word is enough. Thank you.

Mark, Tieme, and Mette—I am so happy we are here.

I have spoken.
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From maker to patron (and back)
Helleke van den Braber (1970) studied Arts and Culture Studies at Utrecht University. In 1995, she completed specialisations in modern western literature, modern Dutch literature, and literary science, from which she graduated cum laude. In 2002, she received her PhD from Utrecht University, supervised by Sophie Levie and Joost Kloek, with a thesis examining modern, twentieth-century patronage. In To Give and to Get: Literary Patronage in the Netherlands between 1900 and 1940, published in Dutch, she demonstrates that, between 1900 and 1940, a culture of patronage flourished in which many patrons and authors managed to find each other in the coulisses of the art world. These gift relationships varied between several months and several decades in duration. Between the artists and the patrons involved, there was much asking, giving, exchanging, investing, and gifting; there was refusing and denying, mediation and intrigue, conflict and making up. To Give and to Get demonstrates the mediating role that patronage plays in processes of cultural production and distribution, and shows that the emergence and functioning of patronage is closely connected with, and makes use of, the way in which the cultural field is structured, both during this period and beyond. To Give and to Get was published in 2002 by Vantilt.

Since 2002, Helleke has been working as a university lecturer and director of studies of the Department of Arts and Culture Studies at Radboud University. In 2010, she set up the master’s programme in Cultural Policy and Patronage (now known as Cultural Policy and the Business of Art). The master produces students able to help and inspire the cultural sector in its search, either for tried and tested, or innovative forms of financing and new ways of engaging with the public. Since 2017, together with alumni and colleagues, she has organised a series of public debates in the LUX cultural centre in Nijmegen. In this series, together with musician and cultural scientist Rocco Hueting, she presents a range of debates about pop music, each addressing a topical theme at the intersection of music, money, and value.

In her lectures and publications, Helleke looks into the cultural function of patronage—both present and past—often via theories of artistic practice, citizenship, power, creativity, autonomy, identity, and legitimacy. Her three PhD students conduct various studies into research that touches upon these themes. She has published in international journals and multi-authored volumes about both contemporary and nineteenth-century gift cultures, with special attention for the (assumed) continuity between these two periods. She finds her case studies across the disciplines: for
example, she wrote about gift relations in the visual arts, theatre, literature, rock music, and hip hop.

In addition to patronage, she has also published on the topics of cultural exchange, networking, cultural criticism, artistic practice, and cultural branding, often in collaboration with others. For example, in 2010, together with Jan Gielkens, she published the volume In 1934: Nederlandse cultuur in internationale context (Querido; In 1934: Dutch Culture in the International Context). This was followed in 2013 by the volume Explosive Debates: Critical Traditions in Dutch and English Journals 1750-1940 (Walburg Pers), co-written by Inger Leemans. In 2021, Branding Books Across the Ages: Strategies and Key Concepts in Literary Branding (Amsterdam University Press) will be published, which she edited together with Jeroen Dera, Jos Joosten, and Maarten Steenmeijer. In 2020 Helleke co-edited the special issue Nederlandse Letterkunde (volume 25, issue 1; Dutch Literature) together with Laurens Ham, Nina Geerdink, and Johan Oosterman, which was dedicated to the economic aspects of artistic practice throughout the centuries.
Chair of Patronage Studies

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Stichting Geef om Cultuur

Stichting Geef om Cultuur (founded in 2011) takes as its main objective the facilitation of mediation, knowledge production, and knowledge dissemination in the field of art and culture. The foundation aims to reach this goal by developing innovative forms of patronage, by stimulating qualitative research, by contributing to public debate, and by disseminating knowledge and skills concerning patronage.
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